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RENEWABLE ENERGY

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SOLAR DOMESTIC HOT WATER SYSTEM

Prepared for

MONTANA DEPARTMENT of NATURAL RESOURCES and CONSERVATION

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Solar domestic hot water system /



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SOLAR DOMESTIC HOT WATER SYSTEM

Prepared by

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P.O. Box 64
Gardiner, MT 59030

August, 1981

Prepared for

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
32 South Ewing, Helena, Montana 59620
Renewable Energy and Conservation Program
Grant Agreement Number 060-811

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I. Program Objectives

Although a large number of Solar DHW heating systems are now available, the economic justification for consumer purchase of these systems is questionable. Tests conducted by the New England Electric Co. on 100 installed systems indicate an average energy savings of only 41%. The average "net ownership" costs of these systems is \$138.00 per year more than the normal gas or electric DHW heating system would cost them. Joan T. Bok, Vice President, New England Electric, states "The initial cost of a solar water heating system remains high. If solar water heating is to gain widespread use among customers in the Northeast in the near term, the industry must find ways to significantly reduce the costs." Most demonstration projects to date parallel the finds of New England Electric. In spite of manufacturers' claims of 70 to 80% energy savings and short pay back periods, an economically justified solar DHW heating system is not readily available for use in the northern section of the United States. Some of the problems with present systems are as follows:

1. High collector costs--\$10.00 to \$20.00 per sq. ft.
2. Small thermal storage--80 to 120 gallons, while a family uses 70 gallons a day. This does not allow for adequate thermal storage for cloudy days.
3. High overall system costs--Retail installed costs for a system providing 40 to 50% of the DHW requirements in the Northern U.S. range from \$2,000.00 to \$4,000.00 before tax credits are deducted.
4. Installation difficulties due to improper orientation of house, angle of roof, lack of space for storage tank and plumbing problems.
5. High cost of site installation.
6. Poor appearance of installation, due to placement of collectors on roof oriented at improper angle and orientation.

Our goals for this project are:

1. Establish or find a manufacturing source for a high quality collector with the following characteristics:
 - a. cost of less than \$7.00 per square foot
 - b. design life of 20 years
 - c. warranty of 3 to 5 years
 - d. good efficiency at Δ_t of 120°F, to operate during Montana winters
2. Two to three days of thermal storage capacity
3. Immunity from freezing conditions
4. Reliable operation
5. Modular factory assemble of total system
6. 85% energy savings for total installed system
7. Payback of 11 years.

8. Architect designed structure to hold system that will look good.
9. Low installation costs.
10. Demonstration of an economically justified, good looking solar domestic hot water heating system.

II. Project Implementation:

The general design of the system followed the proposal in most areas. The structure of the solar DHW system was designed by Doug Rand, Architect, Bozeman, Montana, and the structure proved easy to build and assemble. The storage tank was placed underground to facilitate drain back of water from the collectors to the tank. Eighteen inches of fiberglass insulation was used around the sides and top of the tank and six inches of styro-foam under the 300 gallon tank.

A block diagram of the drain back Solar DHW system used is attached as exhibit #1. Pictures of the completed system are attached as exhibit #2.

1. Project Planning and Acquisition:

Most planning for the project was accomplished during the proposal preparation. Mr. Doug Rand designed the support structure for the system as well as the collector housing. No problems were experienced in obtaining the materials and parts used in the system. Suppliers of parts and materials were:

Terra Light	Absorber Plates
Olympic Solar	Plating
C.E. Glass	Glass
Pacific H. & F.	Sheet Metal
McKlees	Metal Fab.
Macon Supply	Silicone Caulk
Cadillac Plastic	Teflon
Simkins and Hallin	Lumber
Mountain Supply	Pipe and Fittings.
Heliotrope Gen.	Differential Control
Gaco Western	Rubber Coating
Richdel	Pump and Vacuum Breaker

2. System Installation:

Approximately 100 hours were expended in the installation of this Solar DHW system. Most of this time (over 50 hours) was spent building the structure to hold the collectors and storage tank. No major problems were encountered during the installation and the finished structure looks good and performs well. A brief description of each part of the system is as follows:

A. Collector Absorber Plates: Plates made by Terra Light

were selected due to price, performance and delivery. Chrome plating these collectors raised the cost to about \$7.74 per square foot. (See EXHIBIT # 3 for Data Sheet)

B. Collector Housing: A sheet metal housing was used and was found to be adequate. However, again the cost of about \$400.00 was considered to be too high. Wood was considered, but was not used due to shorter life, more maintenance, and probable outgassing at stagnation temperatures. Other materials were considered including extruded aluminum (costs were too high), fiberglass (looks good but delivery time was excessive). Fiberglass reinforced concrete looks like a very good and economical possibility and will be tried on a future collector.

C. Storage Tank: The 300 gallon tank was designed using pressure treated plywood and a Gaco rubber liner. The cost of the tank is low but labor was high. A high temperature fiberglass tank would probably be a more economical choice if labor costs are considered.

D. Storage Tank Insulation: Eighteen inches of fiber-glass insulation was used around and on top of the storage tank. The cost of the material is low and insulation properties are good. However, an outer box must be used to protect the insulation thus raising the cost, and the insulation can get wet if there is a leak. Approximately 10 inches of urathane insulation could be used without an outer cover, and since labor costs would be reduced the overall costs might be less. In any case, the size of the overall tank could be reduced by about 16 inches which would reduce size and excavation costs.

E. Pipe Insulation: Two pieces of 6"x12" styrofoam insulation were used to sandwich the pipes going to and from the Solar DHW System. Grooves were cut in one piece of the insulation to accomodate the pipes, and visqueen was wrapped around the styrofoam to protect it from water. This method of insulation was economical and very effective. The heat loss from the pipe run is very low as indicated by the heat exchanger test.

F. Collector Support Structure: The support structure looks good and is functional. However, the costs of material and labor are high. Significant reductions in cost are possible in this area, and a simpler structure with less material could be used.

G. Installation: Backhoe work, plumbing and electrical went well. Underground wiring was used and layed in the trench used for the water pipe.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Tank Temp.</u> <u>Top</u>	<u>Tank Temp.</u> <u>Bottom</u>
29 May 81	7 PM	155.5	148.5
30 May 81	8AM	141.4	128.0
30 May 81	7PM	135.0	110.6
31 May 81	7 PM	105.0	82.5 Cloudy
2 June 81	7 PM	119.5	109.1 Cloudy
6 June 81	7 PM	144.1	134.0
25 June 81	7 PM	164.0	152.3
July		140 to 180 throughout month	
28 July 81	7 PM	172	158.0
3 Aug 81	7 PM	168	154.0
4 Aug 81	7 PM	158.7	149.8 Cloudy

Note; The efficiency has reached 76% on clear warm days.

Heat Exchanger tests:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Tank Top</u>	<u>Tank Bot.</u>	<u>T_{in}</u>	<u>T_{out}</u>	
6/10/81	119.2	110	52	118	Cloudy Day
6/11/81	124	106	52	121	Cloudy Day

5. System cost; Due to the necessity of purchasing more material than required for one unit, the costs were higher than the proposal first unit costs. A number of hardware changes were made and some material and parts purchased were not used. As an example, a submersible pump was initially tried, but was found to be unsatisfactory due to its short life, when operating above 140°. As a result, the actual cost of material and labor for the Solar DHW system was \$2,675.11 more than that estimated in the proposal. A large part of this extra cost was for extra material which can be used on later systems. (See EXHIBIT # 4 for a cost breakdown).

6. Economic Evaluation; Since this first unit was an engineering prototype system, it is not appropriate or meaningful to figure payback time of the total cost of the project which was \$7,782.11. (See Exhibit #4 for proposal cost verses actual cost tabulation). The last column of Exhibit #4, unit cost, tabulates the cost which would apply to the next unit built to the same design. This unit cost of \$2,873.66 (not including G & A fee) compares very favorably with the \$2,672.00 cost of the proposal for the second and third units. The second and third unit cost will be further reduced from the unit cost figures of exhibit 4 by using a cheaper collector housing, a simpler support structure, and a styrofoam or urethane foam insulated tank. The installation costs were low and no major changes would be made for the next units. Labor and material costs for the next several units are estimated to be \$2,200.00 and labor and material unit cost for 100 systems should be around \$1,900.00. With a 30% G & A plus fee the cost comes to \$2,860.00 for several units, and \$2,470.00 for 100 units. Exhibit #5 contains TI-59 calculator print out data on system performance and cost and payback data on the \$2,860.00 cost and the \$2,470.00 cost. As you can see the payback looks good.

3. System Testing and Modification: The system has been tested using the Heliotrope Digital Temperature readouts, a Blue White Ind. Flowmeter and a Leads and Northrup temperature potentiometer. The water flow through the collectors was set to 3.5 GPM and has remained set at this point. The efficiency of the 120° coper heat exchanger was checked at 5 GPM using an L & N temperature potentiometer. The results were as follows:

Temperature in	52°F
Water tank temperature (top of tank)	124°F
Water tank temperature (bottom of tank)	106°F
Water temperature of output from heat exchanger	121°F

Problems observed during testing:

- a. The vacuum breaker leaked. Richel was called and they advised me to clean the breaker. This corrected the problem.
- b. A leak developed in one of the tank feedthru fittings. The tank was drained and the leak repaired.

The peak efficiency of the system was measured at 65% to 76%. With a use rate of 46,648 BTUs/day (70 gal x 8.33 x 80°F Temp. Rise) the system has been supplying 100% of our hot water during the summer months. From 17,000 to 19,616 BTUs/hr. are stored around 1 to 3 PM. The temperature of the 300 gallon tank is raised from 20 to 30 degrees on a clear day (50,000 to 75,000 BTUs), and frequently is shut off by the high temperature storage cut off at 180°F. The storage tank temperature normally runs from 130°F to 180°F depending on the amount of cloud cover.

4. System Performance: Since no mechanized test equipment was available, the performance was only checked periodically. However, 100% of our hot water has been obtained from this system since May, 1981.

Date	Time	Col. Temp.	T ₁ Temp.	T ₀ Temp.	Temp. Rise	Water Flow
25 Jun 81	3:30 pm	180.5	160.9	170.4	9.5	3.56 GPM
	3:40 pm	180.8	161.2	170.8	9.6	"
	4:00 pm	-	160.9	170.8	9.9	"
17,318 BTU/Hr - Collector size = 86.1 SF Tank Size = 300 Gal. Insulation = 290 BTU/SF 86.1 SF x 290 BTU/SF = 24,969 BTU/Hr Efficiency = 17,318 BTU / 24,969 BTU = <u>69.4%</u>						

III. Conclusions and Recommendations:

The drainback DHW system constructed has been very efficient and reliable. The collector costs of about \$10.00/sf was above that anticipated, and the cost of the structure (\$2,400.00) was also higher than expected. If the collector costs can be reduced to \$7.00/sf (\$602.70) and the support structure can be reduced to several hundred dollars, the system would have immediate commercial merit.

IV. Monitoring:

The system performance will be periodically monitored and performance data will be made available upon request.

V. Public Availability:

Approximately thirty people have seen the system, most of which have been from Gardiner. The responses have been very favorable. The system is available for review at any reasonable time.

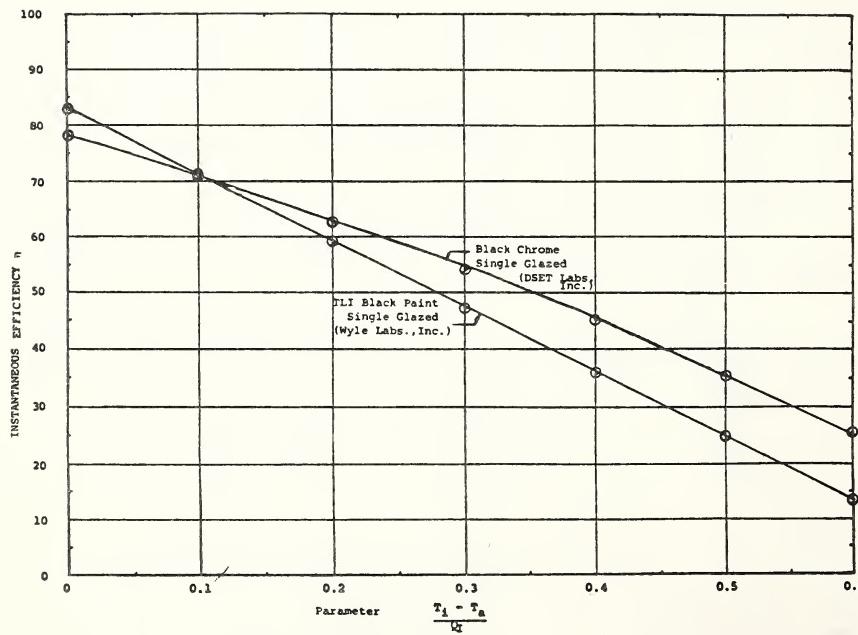
VI. Program Evaluation:

I think the program is excellent. All personnel have been very helpful and timely in their response. I am hopeful that commercial development aspects of alternate energy can be expanded.

FLOW RATES AND PRESSURE DROPS

<u>Flow Rate</u> (GPM)	<u>Pressure Drop (psi)</u>	
	<u>Model</u>	<u>CT-75</u>
0.25	0.001	0.006
0.50	0.005	0.023
0.75	0.010	0.050
1.00	0.018	0.086
1.50	0.040	0.183

INSTANTANEOUS EFFICIENCY GRAPH
(Based on Absorber Area)



TERRA-LIGHT, INC., 30 MANNING ROAD, P.O. BOX 493, BILLERICA, MASS. 01821, TEL. (617) 663-2075

A wholly owned subsidiary of Butter Manufacturing Company.

EXHIBIT #3

		<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>Grant Est.</u>	<u>Actual Exp.</u>	<u>Invoice</u>	<u>Company</u>	<u>Diff.</u>	<u>Unit Cost</u>
1. Salaries								
Design Time	None	--			--	--	--	--
2. Operating Expense								
A. Contracted Services								
1) Structure Design	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00		--		d. Rand	--	0
2) Site Preparation						--		60.00
Electrical	60.00	60.00		Cash		D Holland	60.00	150.00
Plumbing	90.00	150.00		Cash		K Holland	+ 64.00	128.00
Backhoe Work	64.00	128.00				--	(30.00)	--
Landscaping	30.00	0				--	(36.00)	--
Piers	36.00	0				--	(48.00)	--
3) Structure Fabrication	484.00	815.00		2\$3/81		Crev. C.	+331.00	300.00
Storage Tank Fab.	48.00	--				--		50.00
Totals	\$2,312.00	\$2,655.00						\$388.00
B. Supplies and Material								
1) Site Preparation						--	(70.00)	--
a. 1 yard concrete	\$70.00	0				CED	+119.40	40.00
b. Wire, connectors etc.	30.00	149.40				Grainger		
c. 120' 3/4" Pipe and Misc	120.00	168.20		668742		Mount Sup.	+48.20	120.00
d. Anchor Bolts and misc	20.00	4.28		26425		Shop Cen.	(25.72)	20.00
e. Urethane ins.	50.00	149.76		2/15/18		Slim/Hal	+99.76	100.00
f. Sod and Grass seed	40.00	0		14261		--	(40.00)	--
g. Pier forms	10.00	0		--		--	(10.00)	--
Totals	\$350.00	\$471.64						\$121.64
								\$280.00

EXHIBIT #4

	<u>Grant Est.*</u>	<u>Actual Exp</u>	<u>Invoice</u>	<u>Company</u>	<u>Diff.</u>	<u>Unit Cost.</u>
C. Communications						
Telephone	30.00	300.00 est.	--	Bell	+270.00	--
Reports and postage	15.00	15.00 est.	--		0	--
D. Travel	--					
E. Rent	--					
3. Equipment						
Watt meter	--	52.81	70501	Blue/White	(47.19)	--
Water Meter	100.00		--		(90.00)	--
Temp.meter and rec.	--	0	--		0	--
Electronic therm.	90.00		--			
4. Administration 10%	430.70	430.70	--		+132.81	0
Total costs	\$4,837.70	\$7,782 .11			\$2,945.11	\$2,873.66

EXHIBIT # 4

F-Chart (page 1)Monthly Energy Load supplied by Solar

Program No: ST 36/e

Calculation No:

Calculated on: 9 Aug. 1981 Solar DHW System

Month	1.00	4.00	7.00	10.00
Total load Btu-kJ/mo.	1506730.40	1506730.40	1506730.40	1506730.40
Collector area m ²	86.10	86.10	86.10	86.10
Supp. by solar kJ/mo.	1019146.06	1336532.69	1655042.06	1522644.24
Solar fraction %	0.68	0.89	1.00	1.00
ft ² -m ²				
Btu-kJ/mo.				
%				
ft ² -m ²				
Btu-kJ/mo.				
%				
ft ² -m ²				
Btu-kJ/mo.				
%				
Month	2.00	5.00	8.00	11.00
Total load Btu-kJ/mo.	1506730.40	1506730.40	1506730.40	1506730.40
ft ² -m ²	86.10	86.10	86.10	86.10
Btu-kJ/mo.	1042902.07	1484217.23	1673896.07	1200053.76
%	0.69	0.99	1.00	0.80
ft ² -m ²				
Btu-kJ/mo.				
%				
ft ² -m ²				
Btu-kJ/mo.				
%				
Month	3.00	6.00	9.00	12.00
Total load Btu-kJ/mo.	1506730.40	1506730.40	1506730.40	1506730.40
ft ² -m ²	86.10	86.10	86.10	86.10
Btu-kJ/mo.	1415191.23	1663462.76	1605265.49	772643.82
%	0.94	1.00	1.00	0.51
ft ² -m ²				
Btu-kJ/mo.				
%				
ft ² -m ²				
Btu-kJ/mo.				
%				
ft ² -m ²				
Btu-kJ/mo.				
%				

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EXHIBIT # 5

F-Chart (page 2)

Yearly energy load supplied by solar
Economical analysis

Program No: ST 36/e

Calculation No:

Calculated on: 9 Aug. 1981 Solar DHW System

Collector area	A (ft ²) - (m ²)	86.10
Yearly fraction supplied by solar	(%)	0.87

\$2,470.00, 40% Cr.

~~m²~~ - ft² 86.10

\$/10 ⁶ kJ - Btu	10.00
\$	-49.47
\$/10 ⁶ kJ - Btu	20.00
\$	108.58
\$/10 ⁶ kJ - Btu	30.00
\$	266.62
\$/10 ⁶ kJ - Btu	40.00
\$	424.66

~~m²~~ - ft²

\$/10 ⁶ kJ - Btu	
\$	
\$/10 ⁶ kJ - Btu	
\$	
\$/10 ⁶ kJ - Btu	
\$	
\$/10 ⁶ kJ - Btu	
\$	

\$2860.00, 40% Cr.

Collector area 86.10

~~m²~~ - ft²

Fuel cost	10.00	\$/10 ⁶ kJ - Btu
Yearly savings	-82.28	\$
Fuel cost	20.00	\$/10 ⁶ kJ - Btu
Yearly savings	75.76	\$
Fuel cost	30.00	\$/10 ⁶ kJ - Btu
Yearly savings	233.80	\$
Fuel cost	40.00	\$/10 ⁶ kJ - Btu
Yearly savings	391.85	\$

~~m²~~ - ft²

\$/10 ⁶ kJ - Btu	
\$	
\$/10 ⁶ kJ - Btu	
\$	
\$/10 ⁶ kJ - Btu	
\$	
\$/10 ⁶ kJ - Btu	
\$	

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EXHIBIT # 5

KOLLWITZWEG 19
64 DARMSTADT - ARHEILGEN
WEST GERMANY
TEL: 06151/31887

607 CHURCH
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48104
U.S.A.
TEL: 313/769-6588

SOLARCON

Program No.- ST 36 /e

Calculated on: 9 Aug. 1981 Data for \$2470.00 System (SI)

Calculation No.:

Location:

(E)

00			0.
01			30.
02			12.
03			0.
04			0.
05			15804338.85
06			207.5116215
07			0.
08			30.1
09			1506730.4
10	Total load per year	kJ/year	18080764.8
11	Energy collected: 1st collector size	kJ/year	15804338.85
12	2nd collector size	kJ/year	Btu/year
13	3rd collector size	kJ/year	Btu/year
14	4th collector size	kJ/year	Btu/year
15			0.
16			0.
17			50.
18		Jan	305247.2891
19		Feb	308285.2323
20		March	441334.2338
21	Total insolation on tilted surface HT	April	391436.1561
22		May	438524.0912
23		June	513592.0396
24	ambient temperature	July	488682.0086
25		Aug	502664.0132
26	heating degree hours	Sept	486574.0581
27		Oct	463486.1171
28		Nov.	352254.2093
29		Dec	228301.2525
30	Storage fluid capacitance/ Ac	Cst/Ac	100. Btu/h, °F, ft ²
31	Collector fluid capacitance	Cc/Ac	20. 32 Btu/ft ² , h, °F
32	Storage size correction factor	K2	0. 852481414
33	Load heat exchanger correction factor	K4	1.
34	Storage tank size M	Liter/m ²	3. 484 gal/ft ²
35	Cost of storage tank	\$/liter	1. 599 \$/gal.
36	Fixed installation costs	\$	477. 36 \$
37	Installed costs (proportional)	\$/m ²	6. 1 \$/ft ²
38	Interest charge		0. 14
39	Auxiliary fuel costs	\$/mill kJ	10. \$/mill Btu
40	FR x AT		0. 6825
41	FR x UL	W/m ² , °C	0. 6 Btu/ft ² , h, °F
42	Space heating load factor	Ua	0. Btu/°F, h
43	Water heating load per month	Qw	1506730.4 Btu/month
44	Domestic warm water correction factor	K3	9921275426
45	Effectiveness of storage heat exchanger	cc	1.
46	FR'/FR		1.
47	Minimum warm water temperature	T _w	120. °F
48	Public water supply temperature	T _m	45. °F
49	Collector Area	Ac	86. 1 ft ²

F-Chart (page 3)
Memories

Program No.: ST 36/e

Calculated on: 9 Aug. 1981, Data for 2860.00 System.

Calculation No:

(SI)

Location:

(E)

00			0.	
01			0.	
02			0.	
03			0.	
04			0.	
05			0.	
06			0.	
07			0.	
08			0.	
09			0.	
10	Total load per year	kJ/year	0.	Btu/year
11	Energy collected: 1st collector size	kJ/year	0.	Btu/year
12	2nd collector size	kJ/year	0.	Btu/year
13	3rd collector size	kJ/year	0.	Btu/year
14	4th collector size	kJ/year	0.	Btu/year
15			0.	
16			0.	
17			0.	
18		Jan	305247.2891	
19		Feb	308285.2323	
20		March	441334.2338	
21	Total insolation on tilted	April	391436.1561	
22	surface HT	May	438524.0912	
23		June	513592.0396	
24	ambient temperature	July	488682.0086	
25		Aug	502664.0132	
26	heating degree hours	Sept	486574.0581	
27		Oct	463486.1171	
28		Nov	352354.2093	
29		Dec	228301.2525	
30	Storage fluid capacitance/ Ac	Cst/Ac	W/OC,m ²	100. Btu/h, °F, ft ²
31	Collector fluid capacitance	Cc/Ac	W/m ² , °C	20.32 Btu/ft ² , h, °F
32	Storage size correction factor	K2		0. 1
33	Load heat exchanger correction factor	K4		1.
34	Storage tank size M		Liter/m ²	3.484 gal/ft ²
35	Cost of storage tank		\$/liter	2.54 \$/gal.
36	Fixed installation costs		\$	1059. \$
37	Installed costs (proportional)		\$/m ²	12.08 \$/ft ²
38	Interest charge			0.14
39	Auxiliary fuel costs		\$/mill kJ	10. \$/mill Btu
40	FR x ΔT			0.6825
41	FR x UL		W/m ² , °C	0.6 Btu/ft ² , h, °F
42	Space heating load factor	Ua	W/OC	0. Btu/°F, h
43	Water heating load per month	Qw	kJ/month	1506730.4 Btu/month
44	Domestic warm water correction factor	K3		0.
45	Effectiveness of storage heat exchanger	cc		1.
46	FR'/FR			1.
47	Minimum warm water temperature	Tw	°C	120. °F
48	Public water supply temperature	Tm	°C	45. °F
49	Collector Area	Ac	m ²	86.1 ft ²



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